

TUITION, STUDENT DEBT HIKES IN FED PLAN - P.5

CITY COLLEGE NEWS

NOVEMBER 1994

GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE

VOLUME 12, NO. 3



Photo: Peter Varnos

CURB CUTS, WHEEL TRANS and elevators have made Toronto an paradise of accessibility for English as a Second Language student Margaret Zrodowski, who recently came to Canada from Poland. She rarely gets out back at home because Warsaw sidewalks and buildings can't accommodate her wheelchair.

Wheelchair in Poland means life spent inside

By Peter Varnos

Margaret Zrodowski loves Canadian elevators, but our warm hearts give her the biggest lift.

The 29-year-old Polish woman, who has spent her whole life in a wheelchair, came to Toronto in April to learn English at George Brown.

What she discovered, starting at the airport, was a dream come true: buildings with wheelchair access and facilities, smooth sidewalks, Wheel Trans and elevators everywhere.

"For me this is very good. I cooked for myself for the first time and went for a walk. In my country it's impossible to go out."

Without a comprehensive wheelchair access policy in Poland, her movement is severely restricted. Most buildings are old and have never been upgraded with ramps or elevators. The sidewalks are uneven or in disrepair, and rarely showed in winter.

Zrodowski, who has a master's degree in theology, accepts the confines of her life in Poland and plans to make the best of it with a new career as an English teacher.

"People will come to my house to learn English and I will not have to go out," she says.

However, Zrodowski, who was initially sponsored by the Polish Foundation for the Handicapped, could only raise enough money to stay for 12 weeks. After that she had few options but a return flight home to the unfriendly streets of Warsaw — her ambitions unfulfilled.

Zrodowski's dream of teaching — which would require many more weeks of classes — was on the verge of being shattered when Kensington Campus teacher Vera Teophil began scrambling to find a way to keep her here.

"She's always smiling, always in a good mood," says Teophil. "She works very hard and never complains. She's really an inspiration."

Teophil contacting other teachers to raise money to help pay Zrodowski's nominal living expenses. She also convinced the owners of the home where Zrodowski was staying to lower her rent from \$500 to \$200 a month.

"I'm overwhelmed with the response, with the help we've received," says Teophil, who has dug deep into her own pockets to keep the young woman going.

Dog chews homework update: excuses still buy time for 1,000s

By Neil McGillivray

After years in the classroom, Doug Cowling thought he had heard every possible excuse from students with late work. There were enough illnesses to fill Toronto General, enough dead relatives to fill a cemetery and enough acts of God to make an insurance adjuster's head spin.

Then a student surprised the George Brown English teacher by saying she was missing a deadline because she had been held hostage.

"I said 'Give me a break!'," says Cowling.

The student explained that she was getting ready to crack the books with a friend when her friend's boyfriend burst in brandishing a gun. Police surrounded the house and, after a tense stand off, the boyfriend surrendered and no one was hurt — but the student lost her will to complete her assignment.

Cowling was still skeptical until he went home.

"I turned on the news and they were talking about the hostage taking," he remembers ruefully.

With one round for students, both the honest and the crafty, in their centuries-old struggle to get extra time for school work from teachers who have the power to grant, or deny, deadline extensions.

Making excuses is a set piece drama that's acted out hundreds of times every week at George Brown. Students who can't meet deadlines come as supplicants to ask teachers for more time — often with reasons that vary from tragic to comical.

"Illness of a family member is always the easiest to use," says Cowling. "The fading grandmother is my favourite...I find it hard not to laugh sometimes."

Students confirm that one of the most common excuses they make, and one of the hardest for teachers to question, is illness — either their own or that of a relative.

"I said I was sick for three days and I wasn't really sick,"

says one student. "They never ask for doctors' notes," she adds.

"I said my daughter kept me up all night," says a male student.

With the proliferation of home computers, excuses have also gone high-tech, with students using real or imaginary crashed hard drives and printer problems to buy some extra time.

had a liver transplant today," he said — a fact that was later confirmed.

Why do students make up excuses after the fact rather than asking for extensions before their work is due?

One Community Services student puts it this way: "If you ask for an extension your teacher can always say no, so you just hand it in late with an excuse and you don't give them a chance to say no."

Cowling, and several other teachers, say that deadlines are usually flexible — if they are contacted by students before assignments are expected.

"The smartest students realize that if you come before the work is due that that anything can be negotiated," he says.

Teachers say they know many excuses they hear are fabrications but that it's more important for students to do the work — albeit late — and be taken at their word than to conduct enquiries and penalize late work harshly.

"Students do have real problems," says St. James English co-ordinator Cynthia Brouse, "and, because they're adults, I tend to accept serious

excuses at face value."

Brouse also admits that making excuses was something she did while in university. "I was pretty good at it when I was a student. I'd exaggerate (personal problems)...I'd burst into tears."

Cowling tells students at the beginning of every semester: "There's no excuse you can think of that I haven't used myself."

Early Childhood Education teacher Noel Young says he accepts excuses from students ("I know some students that have a lot of grandmothers who have passed away," he says) but prefers them to talk to him about problems before assignments are due.

"Basically I want (students) to talk to me...to be upfront, and clear and direct."

Although a stereotypical teacher is a stern disciplinarian, some teachers say they don't

EXCUSES: A STUDENT'S GUIDE

Make them early rather than late:

Teachers say they prefer hearing about late work before it's due and are more open to offering extensions.

Keep them simple and short:

"The more elaborate, an excuse the less credible it is," says one teacher.

Offer a new deadline — and stick to it: Teachers say they want students to offer "a solution to the problem" rather than leaving things open-ended.

Never ever tell a teacher you forgot or hand in work late without some explanation — it opens the door for maximum penalties.

"My computer disk got erased — I've used that," says one St. James student.

Some students tailor their excuses to the sex of their teacher to produce the maximum amount of sympathy and understanding.

"If it's a male teacher you look really sad and you compliment them on their clothing," says one female student. "With a woman you have to use women's issues, mostly your period or boyfriend troubles."

Another female student uses a different strategy. "If it's a man, tell him it's female trouble and he won't ask any questions," she says.

Some students, who say that teachers are glib, push the limits of credibility.

"I said our house caught on fire," says one student proudly.

One evening student phoned his teacher from hospital to explain his absence from class: "I

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HEARD IN THE HALLS

What would you do if you won \$1 million?



"I'd buy myself a house and I wouldn't have to pay a mortgage, and I'd buy a car. I'd pay off my tuition and not have to take money from the government. Definitely, I'd still go to school because when that million ran out I'd want to get a job."

Pearl Park
Health Care Aide program



"I think I'd do some community development - social programs and things like that...I wouldn't give it all, I'd take a small percentage for myself just for living standards like a car, house, things like that."

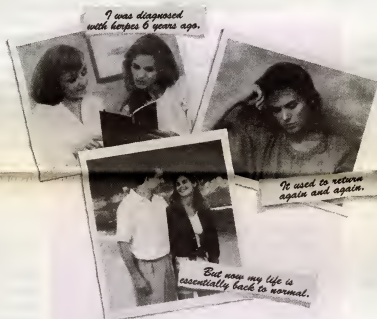
Elijah Thompson
Career Services



"Well, I'd buy a large boat and sail to the South Pacific...and retire of course."

John Pettitt
Math teacher

You can take control of genital herpes



...and your life

Coping with recurrent symptoms such as itching or burning pain, tingling, sores, or even localized redness in or near the genital area has never been easy. Add to this the emotional impact of guilt, resentment, depression... a disruption of daily life.

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availability of affordable treatments, and counselling - can help you get your life essentially back to normal and potentially keep outbreaks out of the picture for years.

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CALL 1-800-HSV-FACS
1-800-4-178-227

And consult your physician

just whose
FOLLIES do
you think they are anyway?

END OUR FOLLYS 15, 16, 17 AND 18

BOUQUETS OR BRICKBATS

Give City College News
a call on its new
24-hour comment line



Do you have an opinion about George Brown or college that you'd like to share with our readers? Give us a call at 867-2279 and leave a message up to five minutes in length. We'll transcribe your call and publish it in the next issue of City College News as a letter. Don't forget to add (and spell) your name and your phone number.



Photo: Adam Kuzmewicz

DOGS ON THE FURNITURE - A group of St. James students put their feet up and relax in the fifth floor student lounge area. They may soon have somewhere else to relax if the college gets a renovation grant it applied for to renovate the first floor of the campus. Part of that renovation would be the construction of a student centre.

Excuses buy time

Continued from page 1

relish the enforcement aspects of their job.

"It's the aspect of teaching that teachers like the least - being a policeman," says Cowling.

Some teachers are also starting to question the appropriateness of their role in negotiating deadlines, and the fairness of the excuse system as it is practiced.

It's a system, they say, that favours students who are outgoing and who can act, and discriminates against students who, because of personality or cultural background, won't approach a teacher with an excuse - real or fabricated.

General Arts and Science program co-ordinator Robin Buyers has tried to eliminate the need for student excuses in her classes at St. James Campus. At the start of every semester she issues all her students a voucher that's good for an automatic week-long extension on one assignment - no reasons need be given.

"I don't believe that academics should be dependent on students revealing details of their personal lives," she says.

Students from some cultures hold teachers and other authority figures in such awe that they cannot engage in the casual and sometimes jocular relations that exist in Canada, Buyer says. Others believe it is not proper to reveal personal information about themselves or their families.

"I don't believe that extensions should be based on whether students have nerve," Buyers says.

Most students welcome the opportunity to get an automatic extension and about 80 per cent use the voucher - although some take pride in not using it, she says.

Teachers are usually unaware of the assignment due dates in all

classes and students can face deadlines in several classes over a short period of time, she says.

The voucher system allows them flexibility in their schedules so they can be responsible and meet deadlines - without excuses.

"In the real world deadlines are important," she says.

While some departments issues guidelines to teachers about how they should handle late work, most teachers either apply those guidelines at their discretion or make up their own rules - some grant no extensions for any reason while others grant unlimited extensions.

"Some students are still working on projects from last year," says one St. James student.

But students aren't the only ones to offer excuses - teachers say they do it sometimes to explain to their classes why it takes them so long to mark and return assignments. "I say I forgot the file at home," confesses one teacher.

Wheelchair in Poland

Continued from page 1

After six months, Zdrodowski can already express herself with fluidity and ease, but Teophil estimates it will take several more months to develop fluency to a level that will allow Zdrodowski to teach English. The teacher is convinced it will be worth the effort.

"It's going to be a worthwhile cause and it's going to make her self-sufficient when she returns to Poland," says Teophil.

But the road ahead for Zdrodowski isn't perfectly clear. The college has agreed to let her sit in on classes until the end of the year because immigration rules prevent her from taking a longer program.

NEWS SHORTS

STUDENTS CAN AVOID LOAN LINE UPS IN JANUARY WITH NEW "CHEQUE'S IN THE MAIL" OPTION

For the first time George Brown is giving students the option of avoiding long line ups to get their student loan cheques. By filling in a form now, students can have the second installment of their Ontario Student Assistance Plan (OSAP) loans mailed to their homes in January, 1995. "We're trying to improve customer service," says Financial Assistance Office manager Audrey Albert. More than 4,000 students will be getting the second installment of their loans in the new year, Albert says. In past years, students often had to wait two to three hours in line to get their cheques. To have cheques mailed, students need to fill out Letter of Permission forms and return them to the Financial Assistance Office at St. James Campus by Nov. 25. The forms are available at registration centres, counselling offices and student association offices at all campuses as well as the Financial Assistance Office (Room 210B). For information, call 867-2476.

TECHNOLOGY FACULTY NEEDS TO FOCUS ON STUDENT NEEDS, NEW PROGRAMMING AND MARKETING - REPORT

George Brown's huge Faculty of Science and Technology needs to focus more attention on student needs and the development and marketing of new programs. These were the conclusions of consultant Denis Hall, who studied the division this summer. "My basic recommendation is that you think much more about marketing and less about technology," Hall told about 50 technology staff at a meeting in October. The faculty should develop new programs, co-operate with other colleges and allow students to move easily between programs, he said. "Students need an education that allows them to keep their options open." President John Rankin told the meeting that some of Hall's recommendation may be implemented while others may not. Acting dean Jim Drennan announced at the meeting that staff task forces will study enrolment, space needs, promotions and new ventures. The task forces will issue final reports by the start of December.

FIRST ALUMNI EVENT TO FEATURE STUDENT PRESIDENT FROM 1966

The first George Brown college-wide alumni event will feature George Stratten, the college's student president in 1966. Stratten, who is semi-retired with college-age children of his own, will speak about his business career at the one-day workshop called Setting Yourself Up for Success. About 3,000 people who graduated from the college in 1994 are being invited to the event, which will be held in March, 1995. George Brown is trying to get in touch with the estimated 50,000 people who have graduated from its programs over the years. Alumni co-ordinator Mary Kennard says alumni should call her at (416) 867-2106 to find out about events or to get involved in the new association.

COLLEGE CO-ORDINATES PROVINCIAL WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAM

George Brown is co-ordinating an effort by 23 Ontario colleges to help about 2,500 people move from social assistance to the working world. Starting this fall, the colleges will offer social assistance recipients basic English, math and computer literacy training as well as orient them to the job market with work placements, job shadowing and career planning. The training, which will be part of Ontario Basic Skills (OBS) programs at colleges, is being funded with \$6.5 million of the \$50 million federal and provincial Job Link Ontario program. George Brown will train about 225 people, including about 15 in its French version of OBS. Job Link project leader Margaret Shinozaki says that after leaving OBS, college students can go on to further studies or enter the workforce. For information about George Brown's OBS program, call 956-7330.

SUPPORT STAFF GET THREE DAYS A YEAR FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

George Brown is a pioneer in the Ontario college system in guaranteeing support staff time off work to improve their job skills. The college recently decided that the college's 540 office, computer, day care, maintenance and cleaning staff would have three days a year for professional development activities. Until now, there has been no guarantee of time off, and some staff were refused time off to take courses or attend seminars. Supervisors still have to agree to staff professional development plans. Ontario college teachers, including those at George Brown, are guaranteed 10 professional development days a year.

COLLEGE SENIORS' GROUP GIVE SCHOLARSHIP - Toby Isaacs of the George Brown Seniors' Association (left) chats with Activation Co-ordinator/Gerontology student Marilyn Bond (centre) before a late September ceremony in which the Association presented Bond with a \$300 scholarship. "I'm putting the money towards textbooks," says Bond. Isaacs is also on the program advisory committee for the Activation program, which teaches people how to meet the needs of seniors.



Photo: Tony Golea

STILL SMILING - Some students in a four-hour aerobathon at Casa Loma Campus in October had enough energy to smile as they were put through their paces. About 150 students - the highest ever - participated in the event, raising more than \$5,000 for athletics and athletic scholarships at George Brown. The event was organized by Deanna Oliver of the Athletics Department with help from students in the Fitness and Lifestyle Management program.

College looks beyond Metro's borders

TODAY TORONTO, tomorrow... the world.

That's the thinking of top George Brown administrators who are now looking intently beyond the borders of the city to recruit students and meet educational needs.

From their new global perspective they say the appeal of the college's current slogan, "The City College," may be wearing a bit thin after about 15 years of use.

"It won't be the city college because we're going to evolve," president John Rankin told a meeting of staff recently.

In coming years the college will take steps to become better known nationally and internationally for the quality and relevance of its programs rather than its geographic location, he says.

Academic vice-president Patricia Groves says that a college image closely linked with Toronto may even be limiting George Brown's potential.

"A broader identity opens more horizons," she says. "We want to be known for what we are, not where we are."

Rankin and Groves say they want the college to earn enough acclaim for the programs it offers in order to attract large numbers of students from outside Metro and Canada and create opportunities for overseas programs and exchanges.

George Brown staff in several departments are currently busy developing programs for people from outside Canada, which could be offered either in Toronto or in another country, and recruiting international students.

The college currently enrolls about 300 full-time international students, including about 80 in English as a Second Language programs.

Over the years it has been involved with dozens of interna-

tional ventures, which have varied from nursing seminars in the Caribbean to a health records program in Saudi Arabia.

But even George Brown students who never leave Toronto may benefit from the college's new global outlook.

The content of full-time programs within the college will be "internationalized" in coming years to allow students to be more effective in the emerging global economy, says external relations vice-president Bob Struthers.

The City College slogan became fixed as part of the col-

lege's logo, when it was redesigned by a student about 15 years ago. The broken interlocking circles of the symbol can be read as stylized G, B and C.

In addition to the logo, the college has emphasized its location in the center of Toronto for many years, using graphics and photographs of downtown landmarks like the CN Tower in calendars, videos and promotional brochures.

Officially, the college is called The George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology. It is named after a prominent politician in 19th century Toronto.



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& Valuable
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Wednesday, November 16, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
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Thursday, November 17, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
STUDENT ID REQUIRED

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The young and generically skilled

By Neil McGillivray

Sweat beaded on Frank's brow as he raced up the subway stairs. He cursed under his breath as people, climbing at normal speed, blocked his path for a few milliseconds. Panting, he raced along the sidewalk to the entrance of an office building. "I'm for it now," he thought as he punched the elevator button. "This is the third time I've been late for work in two weeks. If it wasn't for my PhD, from Harvard, Smithers would have canned me a month ago."

"Smiled your bus again, eh?" Smithers remarked as Frank hurried to his desk. He mumbled an excuse and glanced at Susan in the next cubicle. As usual, she was hard at work, her desk already piled high with computer printouts and file folders.

After what seemed like an eternity of phone calls and number crunching, it was time for a coffee break. The nerds in the office switched instantly from spread-sheets to space games on their computers. Frank followed Susan down to the company cafeteria.

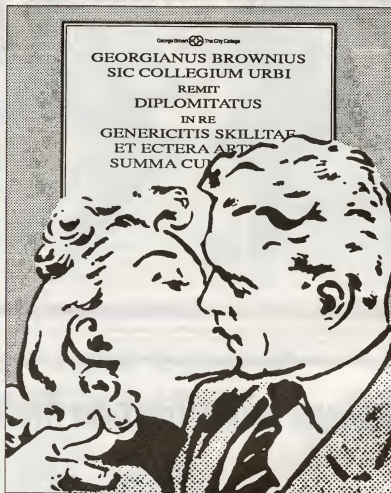
"Mind if I join you?" he asked with a smile, approaching the table where she was sitting.

"Please do," she replied, knowing from Frank's tone of voice that he had more on his mind than idle chit-chat.

She didn't have to wait long to find out what it was.

"How do you do it?" he asked suddenly, a pleading look in his eyes. "How do you get to work on time every single day without fail? You're even back from lunch on time? What's your secret?"

"It's no secret," laughed Susan, blushing a little under the intensity of his gaze. "I learned how to be punctual in college. It was just part of the curriculum."



"You must be joking," scoffed Frank. "I went to some of the best schools in North America and we never covered getting to places on time. Punctuality 101? Tell me more."

"I'll do better than that," Susan said confidently, ignoring his arrogant manner. "Come back to my desk and I'll show you."

Two minutes and a high speed elevator trip later, Susan and Frank huddled over a file folder. "It's all in here," said Susan, pointing to a thick report titled Generic Skills. "Look at Mathematics Learning Outcome number six."

Frank read slowly: "Decide on the optimal way of navigating and reaching destinations on time

by taking into account the variables related to time."

Sensing Frank's difficulty in understanding the complex sentence - chock-a-block with big words - Susan jumped in. "That means knowing which bus you have to take to get to work on time, remembering how long your subway ride is, that sort of thing," she said.

Frank's eyes, now full of wonder, dashed from the page to Susan. "Wow! No wonder you're always on time."

Susan blushed again, this time from the tone of obvious admiration in Frank's voice.

"It was nothing, really," she stammered. "We just had to demonstrate that we could catch the right bus and get to places on time before they gave us our diplomas at George Brown College."

After work, Frank caught up with Susan as she walked towards her bus stop.

"I feel cheated," he blurted out. "I spent all those years studying and they never taught me something as basic as reaching destinations on time. I guess they assumed that we could figure that stuff out by ourselves - how wrong can an educational system be?"

"Don't worry," said Susan, touched by his distress. "With an evening course or two at George Brown you could be right up to par in punctuality."

"That's just what I need," said Frank, cheering up. "But how about telling me more about learning outcomes over dinner tonight? I could pick you up at eight?"

"Alright," said Susan evenly, her voice masking the growing excitement she felt inside. "But don't be late."

LETTERS

Theatre costs

Editor:

Thumbing through City College News (October, 1994), I noticed an ad for the college theatre putting on productions of *Easy Virtue* and *Freeze*. I'm a little angry that GBC staff receive a discount rate of \$7 while students have to pay \$10 for a ticket.

How can they justify having the staff receive a discount when the students are the ones who should be having the discount?

Could you have the theatre department explain themselves? I know it seems trivial to argue about a \$3 difference in price but the point is the staff are well paid by the students and they can easily afford to pay the same price as the students - or more.

The theatre does put on very good productions - I've gone to a few plays and I've always enjoyed it. I know the money that they do make is not a lot, but the staff should not receive a discount. Either the students should be receiving a discount or there should be no discount at all except to seniors.

Name withheld on request
(Editor's note: Poor typography in the ad may have caused some confusion. Students as well as staff and seniors are eligible for reduced ticket prices for college theatre productions.)

Anti-discrimination training

Editor:

The October, 1994, issue of City College News reports the creation of a "centralized reporting system" in regards to "human rights" complaints at George Brown. The article also states that the Board of Governors has decreed mandatory "human rights training sessions" for college staff.

I sympathize fully with anyone who resists these so-called "training sessions."

"Error sessions" would be a more accurate description, at least as far as my own experience goes. In 1992, as an employee for an Ontario government corporation, I and my colleagues were forced to attend an "employment equity" seminar which dealt with issues of harassment and complaints.

At this seminar people were encouraged to make complaints against anyone who said or did anything which may, even in the most absurd manner, be misinterpreted as "offensive." People who overheard anything "offensive" between others were also encouraged to complain. We were told to make official complaints even about things said outside of the workplace! In fact, the seminar "leader" proudly told us of some managers who were dealt with simply because they did not com-

plain about a private memo sent to them by another manager. (The memo was deemed to be "offensive," of course.)

The result of the seminar was a workplace that became, for all intents and purposes, segregated. People who used to have lunch together now reorganized their friends along racial lines - the whites scared of being complained against, the blacks viewing everyone as innately racist.

Yes, racism had poisoned the atmosphere. But it was the "human rights seminar" that had done the poisoning by first, classifying everyone into gender and racial groups, and second, encouraging official complaints behind people's backs.

Only children go around crying "Mommy, he hurt my feelings!" An adult would speak directly with the person he has a problem with.

To the Board of Governors and all those who make their living by exploiting situations of personal conflict, I say: GROW UP! 1984 was, after all, a decade ago.

Daniel Silver
Architectural Drafting, 1st year

Nightingale program

Editor:

You missed a good news story with your October, 1994, article on the Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor/Advocate program (AWCCA) at George Brown. The opening description of Nightingale

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HERE'S HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY!

City College News wants you to have your say! If you're concerned about a topic, event or issue that you think will be of interest to students and staff at George Brown - put it down on paper. Write a letter or an article, or just suggest a story idea to us. Here's how you do it.

1. Make sure your submission is legible (it can be typed or handwritten), keeps to the point and is brief. If it's too long we may edit for length as well as for grammar and spelling.

2. Sign your submission and include your full name, telephone number, address and some indication of your affiliation with the college (i.e., course, name, job, etc.).

3. You may request that your name be withheld from publication. We will respect your request if you provide us with a reason.

4. We welcome anonymous story suggestions, news tips or other material; however, as in all cases above, City College News staff and its editorial board will make decisions about what will be published.

5. Keep a copy of what you send to us. We will not return unsolicited material, including photographs, unless we are provided with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

6. Drop off your submission in a sealed envelope at the mail slot in the information centres in the front lobby of 200 King St. E. at St. James Campus or the third floor entrance of 160 Kendal Ave. at Casa Loma, or send it by Canada Post or internal college mail to:

Editor, City College News, Marketing Services Department, 200 King St. E., Room 542E, George Brown College, Toronto, Ont. M5A 3W6 or fax it to (416) 867-2303.

The deadline for submissions and letters for our December issue is Wednesday November 25.

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CITY COLLEGE NEWS

City College News is a monthly publication of the Marketing Services Department of George Brown College for students, staff and external college partners. Views expressed in City College News are not necessarily those of the college, its administration or board of governors.

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GEORGE BROWN
CITY COLLEGE

Experts see tuition, student debt increases in new federal social security proposals

By Peter Vamos

Prohibitively high tuition fees, huge student loan debts for graduates and poor quality courses offered by private sector trainers: These are what George Brown students and staff see as some of the potential results of the recently announced federal proposals for revamping Canada's social security system.

Most people who spoke with City College News agreed that something must be done to create a revitalized and more viable social safety net, but many saw the government's proposals for post-secondary education and training as simply money-saving measures. Nearly all were fearful of potential negative impact.

"If you look at the total social programs, there is no one across Canada who doesn't think something needs to be fixed," said George Brown President John Rankin. "But nobody wants to lose anything either. It's a political landmine."

Rankin is overseeing the development of a united response to the proposals by Ontario's 25 colleges, to be given to the federal government when it holds cross-Canada consultations and public hearings later this year about the new social policy.

The proposals, made by Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy in a discussion paper released in October, will affect colleges through improved federal student loan guarantees and expanded training programs.

By replacing provincial transfer payments for post-secondary education with a boost in federal student loans, the government hopes to open post-secondary education to many who wouldn't otherwise have the resources. Loan repayments could be geared to a graduate's income, the document said.

Rankin, however, who said he was "cautiously optimistic" about the document as a whole, was skeptical about this idea. "My feeling is they don't understand our typical (college) student."

Rankin says the average college student is already managing some debt, perhaps even a mortgage. The federal government won't be helping these people by increasing their debt load, he said, especially when a cut in federal education money will inevitably lead to higher tuition fees.

"If provincial revenues are going down and federal transfer payments are decreasing, then we have few other sources of income other than tuition fees," he said.

Student Association president Tim Kemp said he is also concerned about higher tuition fees and that the federal moves will limit rather than improve access to post-secondary education.

"Everything (the government) chops, it wants to shift to students," Kemp said.

"It's a user pays system... they're getting it in the paper. So there's a question of access. They want to deregulate the fees and it will almost be up to the college or university as to how much they want to charge for education."

One nursing student who didn't want to be identified was furious at the prospect of tuition fee increases. The thought of a bigger loan was not a comfort for her either. She is trying to raise four children, she said, and maintaining her present debt is already taking its toll.

"So they think they're going to compensate us by increasing our loans? That's crazy. If that happens I'll have to drop out," she said.

But Human Services Counselor Rick McNulty said something has to be done. Although he pays tuition both

here and at the University of Toronto, he sees few options available to the federal government.

"Reforms are necessary," he said. "The social safety network isn't responding to people's needs. I don't agree with raising tuitions, but we are getting a bargain."

Another component of the government's plan emphasizes life-long education - in which people's skills are upgraded in training programs when needed. Through this proposal, the federal government hopes to nudge people back into the workforce and off unemployment insurance and social assistance.

George Brown staff who have studied the implications of the proposal say reduced transfer payments combined with a federal push to develop new training programs is a clear move towards deregulating the training industry.

Rankin warns that deregulation in training could result in the emergence of fly-by-night training operations, where the bottom line is turning a profit, not proper training.

This is also Michael Cooke's fear. Cooke, dean of the Faculty of Community Services, said that although there are some positive philosophical signs in the federal proposals - especially the emphasis on life-long learning - he remains apprehensive.

"I'm a bit skeptical as to whether one (the programs) are implemented, will they be driven by that philosophy or will it be driven by cost cutting?"

Cooke said if the government is simply trying to cut costs then the whole process is "just a dumping exercise" where students will be forced to carry the burden of the government debt.

If it's a question between philosophical standards or a cheaper deregulated industry in today's economy, the cheaper route will likely win, said Terry Dance-Bennink, dean of the Faculty of Access and Preparatory studies.

The push for deregulation is coming just as many established trainers have been calling for national standards, she said.

"If we were going to move to this, it seems like a strange time," she said.

"You can't say in one breath, 'Come on, join hands' and in the next breath, say, 'It's a dog fight. Fight it out. I don't agree with complete deregulation of all social services, so my question is, 'Where does it stop?'"

Rankin sees some merit in deregulation - if standards are established to protect students. Even though deregulation could drastically alter George Brown's role over the next decade, he said, the college is well positioned to be a competitive trainer.

"We're not scared of competition. In fact we welcome competition, so long as there are standards to protect the client."



MINISTER COLLARED AT FASHION OPENING - A George Brown Theatre student pretends to measure Education and Training Minister Dave Cooke's neck at the official opening of the college's new fashion facilities in late October. A trio of theatre students enlivened the event, which attracted about 150 people - many from the fashion industry. George Brown's fashion design and manufacturing programs moved to Casa Loma from the soon-to-be-closed Kensington Campus this summer.

Fashion move to Casa Loma means boys meet girls

IF YOU'RE POLITICALLY correct it's called gender balancing, but in the halls, lounges and cafeteria of Casa Loma Campus it's still the same old story - boys meets girl.

By moving its predominantly female fashion programs to the predominantly male campus this year, the college made a deliberate move to balancing genders - and few of the people involved seem to object.

Certainly not second-year architectural technology student Dean Baird who likes the fact that more women are on campus this year.

"You're not just going to school now...it's social," he says of the new atmosphere at the campus, located at Kendal Avenue and Davenport Road, just northwest of downtown.

Second-year creative fashion student Alexandra Newman likes the arrangement too. At Kensington, where fashion programs were based last year, Newman spent most of her time in school with other women in her program.

"It's better to have a mix," she said. "It feels like a university whereas before I felt like I was in another world...there was no social interaction."

Men have made up the vast majority of students and staff at Casa Loma - which is home to George Brown's Faculty of Science and Technology. At times a "boys' club" atmosphere prevailed, and some women

complained of harassment. A women's lounge and study area was created off the cafeteria a few years ago.

Aside from the men, Newman said the fashion facilities are much better as well for the 255 fashion students who made the move to Casa Loma from the soon-to-be-closed Kensington Campus, in the Kensington

Market area near Spadina Road and College Street.

Students and teachers swapped dingy hallways and peeling paint at the old campus for bright, newly renovated facilities on the fourth floor of the 160 Kendal Ave. building.

At Casa Loma, every class takes place in its own room - something most students take for granted, but a novelty for those in the fashion department. Because of space limitations at Kensington, several classes used to share equipment in one large common area.

Faculty offices are also located in the same area as classrooms at Casa Loma, meaning students no longer have to go to a different building to see their teachers.

What students and staff miss most about Kensington, besides the colour, action and funky feeling of the market area, is the easy access to materials and supplies from stores that serve the downtown fashion industry.

"You don't have the same accessibility. You used to be able to just run out and get supplies," says Newman.

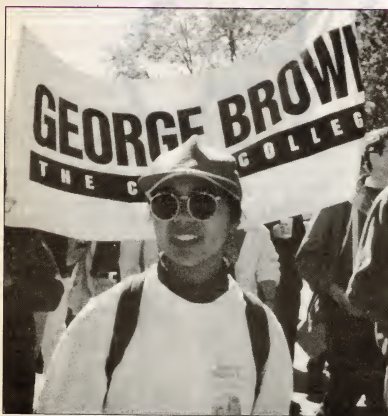
Newman suggested that one answer would be for the department's new retail store, College Creations, located on the fourth floor at 160 Kendal Ave., to carry thread, zippers and other generic fashion supplies for students.

But some things can never be replaced, says Faculty of Creative Work public relations co-ordinator Rosalie Starkey.

"One of the things we prided ourselves on was that for 25 years we were in the heart of the fashion garment district," she says.

But the Kensington area has undergone some major changes recently, Starkey says.

"For a while we had trouble getting students (to come to Kensington) because of the roughness of the area."



AIDS WALK TEAM - George Brown students and staff raise the college's banner high during a walk to raise money for AIDS education, research and patient care in early October. The college's team helped bring total fund raising from the walk to more than \$1 million.

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Better training helps bookstores boost sales

READING IS IMPORTANT! TO the success of any bookstore and, with George Brown's help, SmithBooks has learned how to read its customers better.

With help from the college's Ontario Skills Development Office (OSDO), the huge retail bookseller embarked on an ambitious training plan to develop the customer service skills of its 2,000 employees two years ago - a plan that is now paying off in satisfied customers and sales growth.

From start to finish SmithBooks worked with OSDO consultant Lidia Piragaglia, who conducted a needs analysis and developed a training plan.

"They needed help to arrive at the best method of training all these people," she says. "The outcome of our discussions was that they selected a 'train-the-trainer' course that would initiate the type of cascade training in customer service that they were looking for."

Cascade training involves giving new skills and insights to a small group of people who will then share them with others.

At SmithBooks, the cascade began with 13 area managers from across the country who took an intensive "train-the-trainer" program on customer service

skills. Armed with their new knowledge, the area managers returned to their own stores and spent the next few months teaching and coaching store managers. Then managers, with their area manager, trained their full- and part-time retail sales staff.

The training was completed in September, 1993, because it took time and plenty of scheduling to train staff while continuing to operate the bookstores. About two-thirds of sales staff are part-timers, making it tricky to set up the training.

"The scope of the training program in raw numbers as well as geographically was amazing," says Ed Gogol, Operations Training Manager at SmithBooks. "When we started the training, some of our people lacked customer service skills. In other cases, they had the skills, but not the clear business reason to use them. Now they see training as an opportunity to increase sales and make their jobs more rewarding, and that has been a form of empowerment for them."

SmithBooks is grateful for the help it got from Piragaglia, says Gogol, who had just been hired as one of the company's training managers. For someone who had never before applied for funding, the OSDO support was critical.

The data gathering and accounting functions were quite detailed and that guidance was much appreciated.

"Lidia helped to develop our plan from the start, and to describe the strengths and weaknesses of our current business situation from a training perspective," says Gogol. "She also helped us to scope out our costing and expenses. Without her help, it would've been far more time consuming."

Using the customer service training, the company's concrete goals were to increase sales, reduce shrinkage and improve staff productivity.

SmithBooks is well on its way to achieving those goals, but more training measures may be required.

"We started on the first mile of a long journey in the last year, but I think it will be several years before we have achieved everything we wanted to," Gogol says. "In the meantime, we have reached other goals, including the creation of a better climate for training. Before we started this training, very few of the store managers or area managers took any responsibility for training. It was seen as the responsibility of head office, but now I've seen a shift where those managers are not only doing more training,



SANTA'S HELPERS - Second-year ceramics student Alison Urquhart (right) works on a vase that, when finished in two weeks, will be part of the Jewellery and Pottery Holiday Sale on Nov. 24 at Casa Loma. All merchandise for the sale is created by George Brown students. A percentage of the proceeds goes to the Daily Bread Food Bank and Trinity Hospice. The sale will be held from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the fourth floor staff lounge in 160 Kendal Ave. at Casa Loma Campus.

some of them are taking it a step further and even producing their own training manuals."

Despite the state of the economy, sales have increased and training, Gogol says, is clearly one of the contributing factors. The company started using a customer response card that asks customers about the quality of service they received, and expanded pre-employment assessments and a new employee orientation program.

Another tactic was an improved compensation program in the stores that rewarded staff members for good customer service.

The shrinkage (loss of product due to theft, internal or external) has decreased at SmithBooks, Gogol says.

"Training may not be the only reason for these improvements, but it has helped us to achieve those goals," Gogol says. "Our primary motivation at that time was to improve customer service so that we could objectively record some improvements in that and create some behaviour changes in our employees."

The Ontario Skills Development Office is funded by the provincial government. It can be reached by calling 867-2280 or faxing 867-2304.

Letters

Continued from page 4

Campus "turned into a place of anger, fear and accusation" may have grabbed the reader's attention, but the negative tone and subsequent litany of recommendations didn't reveal the excitement and the hope of what's happening in this program.

In my view, the real story here is how we are dealing with conflict and how we are organizing change. When the students felt their learning goals were not being met by the program, they demanded action. It is remarkable and newsworthy to see how energetically and openly the college responded to the students concerned. It is especially impressive to see how the students got involved. The composition and the performance of the Review Panel demonstrated the commitment of the students, the college and the community to transparency, to collaboration and joint action.

The outcome of the process to date is worth celebrating. The panel drew on the considerable talent and generous volunteer energy of its members to develop consensus on the interim report. Students, staff and community members have received the report eagerly. We are now working hard to refine the final version and implement its recommendations.

There is a refreshing spirit of openness and creativity surrounding this program. Above all there is a collective will to make sure that AWCCA lives up to its mission and makes a measurable contribution to building a violence-free society. Pretty good news, I'd say.

Michael Cooke
Dean
Faculty of Community Services

Poem for teachers

Editor:

This poem is about some great teachers you know.

They teach at George Brown College, where I go.

If you're stuck and just don't get it, they are there and don't give you a headache.

It's easy to learn when you are with people so smart, because they care and have such big hearts.

It's because of people like you, who help people like me - thanks a lot for helping us see.

Note that I have learned what I need, thank you for all your great deeds.

I'll end this poem with one thing to say, thank you George Brown College, and may peace go your way.

Joe Grdevich
Business student



By now, you've probably realized there's more to life than school. And that a job is only as good as the career it builds. We can help. We can give you the skills and financial knowledge to become an accounting professional: a Certified General Accountant. Completing our CGA program of professional studies can lead to better opportunities in business, government and public practice. If you're ready to make even more of yourself, call (416) 322-6520, extensions 385, 225 or 217, or write to us at 240 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto M4P 1K8.

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NOVEMBER EVENTS

SPECIAL EVENTS

Nov. 9 – **Student Forum with George Brown President John Rankin** at noon in the in the Casa Loma student lounge, 160 Kendal Ave. All students are welcome to come and participate. For more information, call 867-2454.

Nov. 24 – **Jewellery and Pottery Holiday Sale** in the Casa Loma staff lounge. Fourth floor, 160 Kendal Ave., 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. All merchandise created by George Brown students. A percentage of the proceeds will go to the Daily Bread Food Bank and Trinity Hospice.

Nov. 28 to Dec. 2 – **Awareness Week**, featuring workshops, films, theatre and displays on issues around gender conflict and relationships, including date rape and homophobia. For more information call the Student Association at 867-2454 or the Student Life Advisory Committee at 867-2674.

ENTERTAINMENT

Nov. 3 – **Camp Zu Pub**, St. James campus, 2-7 p.m. in the student lounge.

Nov. 7 – **Boris the Hypnotist** will be performing at Casa Loma in the student lounge starting at noon. For more information call the Student Association at 867-2454.

Nov. 10 – **Camp Zu Pub**, St. James campus, 2-7 p.m. in the student lounge.

Nov. 17 – **Camp Zu Pub**, St. James campus, 2-7 p.m. in the student lounge.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

Nov. 2 – **Women's Varsity Basketball** home game, Huskies vs. Fanshawe, at 7 p.m. in the St. James gym.

Nov. 3 – **Recreational Badminton Tournament** in the St. James gym. For more information call your campus Athletics department, 944-4627 at Casa Loma or 867-2176 at St. James.

Nov. 4 and 5 – **Women's Varsity Basketball Tournament**, Durham Invitational. For more information call the athletics department at 867-2176 or 944-4627.

Nov. 9 – **Women's Varsity Volleyball** home game, Huskies vs. Niagara at 6 p.m. in the St. James gym.

Nov. 11 – **Men's Varsity Basketball** exhibition home game, Huskies vs. Damian at 7 p.m. in the St. James gym.

Nov. 9 – **Men's Varsity Volleyball** home game, Huskies vs. Sir Sanford Flemming at 7:30 p.m. in the St. James gym.

Nov. 16 – **Women's Alumni Basketball** Tournament at 6 p.m. in the St. James gym.

– **Men's Varsity Basketball** home game, Huskies vs. Seneca at 8 p.m. in the St. James gym.



SIRENS ON STAGE NOV. 28 – Awareness Week at George Brown (Nov. 28 to Dec. 2) will kick off with a performance by the Company of Sirens at Casa Loma starting at 12:30 p.m. The theatre company includes actors (from left) Michael Spence, Lincoln Shand, Corrine Rusch-Drutz and Atherene Binns. The week, which "provides information, opportunities for discussion and dialogue around issues of gender relationships" is sponsored by the Student Association and the Student Life Advisory Committee.

Nov. 19 – **Men's Varsity Volleyball** home game, Huskies vs. Algonquin at 2 p.m. in the St. James gym.

– **Women's Varsity Basketball** home game, Huskies vs. Humber at 4 p.m. in the St. James gym.

Nov. 23 – **Women's Varsity Basketball** exhibition home game, Huskies vs. Niagara at 6 p.m. in the St. James gym.

– **Men's Varsity Basketball** exhibition home game, Huskies vs. Niagara, at 8 p.m. in the St. James gym.

Nov. 28 to Dec. 2 – **Lunchtime Intramural Badminton / Basketball campus-wide championships** at both Casa Loma and St. James. For more information call your campus Athletics department, 944-4627 at Casa Loma or 867-2176 at St. James.

Nov. 29 – **Finance and Property Committee** of the Board of Governors meeting in the boardroom of 500 MacPherson Ave. at 12:30 p.m.

The **George Brown Committee for Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals** will be holding meetings throughout the year. For information about the committee and dates, times and locations of meetings, call 867-2373.

SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

Oct. 29 – **Annual Metro Colleges Part-Time Teachers' Conference** at Centennial College, Warden Woods Campus. Take advantage of this great opportunity to share skills, knowledge and experiences with your colleagues from the region. For more information, call 1-800-268-4419.

Throughout November the Human Rights department will be offering **Workshops for staff: George Brown's policy on discrimination and harassment**. For information, times and locations, call the Human Rights Office at 944-4715.

COLLEGE CLOSINGS

Dec. 2 – **All Student Services offices and facilities** will be closed all day including the financial assistance office, counselling offices, career centres, athletic offices (gyms, and weightrooms, however, will remain open), the Test Centre and alumni office. Normal hours will resume on Monday, Dec. 5.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCES

Nov. 2 – Mahavira Nirvana, Jainism

Nov. 3 – Diwali, Sikhism and Hinduism

Nov. 4 – Quadrant, Baha'i

Nov. 5 – Installation of Holy Scriptures as Guru, Sikhism

Nov. 12 – Birth of the Baha'u'llah, Baha'i

Nov. 18 – Kathina, Buddhism
– Lokashah Jayanti, Jainism

– Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev, Sikhism

Nov. 26 – Day of the Covenant, Baha'i

Nov. 27 – First Sunday of Advent, Christianity (Gregorian)

Nov. 28 – Ascension of 'Abdul-Baha, Baha'i

Nov. 28-Dec. 5 – Hanukkah, Judaism

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